

## FLIRTING AS A FASHION

BACHELOR GIRL BEMOANS ITS PASSING.

By HELEN ROWLAND.

"All the nice things," sighed the Bachelor Girl, poking her finger through a little curl that hung over one ear and twisting the latter carefully into shape, "are going out of fashion."

"What do you mean?" inquired the Mere Man, "Marriage?"

"Yes," agreed the Bachelor Girl, petulantly, pointing her toe at the Persian rug and tracing a design thereon, "and manners and home-cooking and flattery and flirting."

"Flattery and flirting?" exclaimed the Mere Man, disgustedly, "aren't nice?"

"You don't know," retorted the Bachelor Girl, "You've never tried either of them."

"Have you?" The Mere Man turned in his chair and gazed at the Bachelor Girl so intently that she reddened.

"They went out of fashion," she declared, ignoring the question and keeping her eyes on the Persian rug, "before you were born."

"And the moment you were born," added the Mere Man, with conviction.

"What?" The Bachelor Girl glanced up and stopped in the middle of tracing an imaginary circle with her violet kid toe.

"The moment," explained the Mere Man, "that an athletic girl and the tailor-made girl and the bachelor girl appeared upon the scene, the moment that the 'do-as-I-please,' 'carry-my-own-latchkey,' 'look-out-for-myself' creature became the fashion; the moment that women took off their ruffles and put on a stiff shirt waist and a whalebone corset; the moment that girls dropped their illusions and donned their armor; the moment they laid down the law and took up the wheel and the typewriter. A man can't flirt," he finished, scornfully, "with an animal's coat of mail. His tender speeches and soulful glances and pretty compliments won't penetrate a wooden image. They fly right off without making an impression and come back and hit him in the face."

The Bachelor Girl laughed.

"That's because men have forgotten how to make tender speeches and pay pretty compliments," she returned promptly. "They're lost arts. The modern man hasn't time to be subtle and delicate. Even when he tries to flirt he goes about it in a hurried, businesslike manner, just as he would go about ordering a bill of goods or eating a dinner or catching a train. He makes love or an engagement or an afternoon call as if he were making time or money, and does the polite thing as if he were doing a duty. A flirtation, then, is a thing that the little girl who has not been soiled by the wheels and put in motion like an automobile. If men only knew—"

"They know too much already," interrupted the Mere Man emphatically. "That's the trouble. When women were a delicious mystery a chap would imagine all sorts of pretty things about them and say those things as if he meant them. But nowadays we haven't an illusion left. How are we going to tell a girl her cheek is like a rose when she has the cheek to inform us in advance that she bought the rose part at the corner drug store? How are we going to tell her that her hair is a golden snare or to rave about the poetry of her figure when she openly acknowledges that she got the gold and the snare from the smartest hairdresser and the poetry and most of the figure from a fashionable corset maker? You're no longer a fascinating riddle. You're a problem that has been solved, a book that has been read, and a picture that has been painted."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Porter?"

"By a dozen hands—"

"If you mean to be insulting—"

"An invention of the devil—"

"What?"

"Oh!" The Bachelor Girl leaned back and crossed her violet slippers.

"Besides," finished the Mere Man, lighting a cigarette and reclining indolently in his chair, "what's the use of flirting, anyway?"

"Use!" The Bachelor Girl sat up and waved a scornful hand. "It isn't useful. It's beautiful! It's the poetry, the trimming, the fringe round the edge of love. It is to life what lace and perfume and ruffles are to a woman, what the decorations are to the dress, what the dressing is to the salad. It's the exquisite art of exchanging delicate attentions without meaning anything, of fencing without stabbing. It's the sparkle in the champagne, the flavor in the sauce, the dew on the rose. It's a game without a purpose, a delightful way of passing time. But nowadays," and she leaned back again with a helpless little shrug, "a man doesn't want to pass time that way, or any way, or any way, there is something to be gained, unless he has an object or a conquest in view, unless—"

"And a woman doesn't want to pass time that way," broke in the Mere Man, flicking the ashes from his cigarette contemptuously, "unless she has something in view. The minute she finds out that a man is regarding her as a temporary amusement she loses interest in him and cools like a June day after a shower."

"But she wouldn't find it out!" declared the Bachelor Girl triumphantly. "If you knew how to flirt, if you weren't so careful to let her know—"

"You've got to be careful nowadays if you want to flirt," protested the Mere Man. "If you don't, you'll soon find that the lady has been carefully making a husband or a butt of you. You're either bagged or dishied before you know it. In the old days, when girls were dear, innocent little things who believed all you said and took what you didn't say for granted, a fellow could go on poetizing interminably. He could write love notes without the fear of hearing them read in the cold gray dawn of the courtroom, or of seeing them copied in the morning papers. He could rhapsodize over a girl's dimples or her elbows without feeling that she was calculating his income or gathering material for the entertainment of the next chap. The trouble is that the modern girl has developed too much sense—"

"Of course, she has," agreed the Bachelor Girl, hastily.

"Too much sense of humor," The Mere Man leaned back and lazily blew a delicate ring. "It gets on our nerves and drives all the romance out of us. If I should tell you this minute, for instance, that you look like a Madonna, you'd probably reply that you preferred cats to children; or if I should say that that curl over your ear was tantalizing, you'd douse me in the face with the cold remark that it took you three hours to make it on your curling tongs; or, if I should be fool enough to ask for that rose in your hair—er—what would you do?"

The Bachelor Girl laughed mirthfully and tucked the rose more securely into position.

"Exactly!" remarked the Mere Man, cuttingly.

"What?"

"What you did," retorted the Mere Man. "Laugh. That's what the average girl always does when a man gets senti-

mental," and he pulled at his cigarette viciously. "If we pay you impossible compliments you laugh at us, and if we pay you possible ones we know that we are taking them in with a view to taking us in. In these days a woman has no more use for the frills of love than a man. Love isn't a pastime any more; it's a means to an end."

"And the end of it all," rejoined the Bachelor Girl sadly, "is that men spend spare moments at golf and the club and the races, and women spend their superfluous hours in bridge and shopping and gossip, instead of spending them in one another's company. Women have to build clubhouses and organize societies for the prevention of things, to fill up their days and employ their energies, and men have to join lodges and give stag parties. It's too bad!" she sighed. "It must have been such fun to have a man kiss—"

"What?"

"Kiss your hand, without any fear that he would try to kiss your lips; and steal your gloves without feeling that he would eventually use them for pen-wipers, and carry the rose you gave him over his head as a decoration."

"Hear! Hear!"

"Instead of using it to clean his pipe with."

"Yes," agreed the Mere Man, sitting up with a revival of interest, "and it must have been awfully jolly to have a girl work you—"

"Mr. Porter?"

"Work you a pillow cover or a pair of slippers, without feeling that she was going to work you for theater tickets."

"Oh!"

"And swallow all your nonsense, without feeling that she was swallowing a laugh; and take you in—"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Take her confidence, without feeling that she wanted to take you into the family. The trouble is, the Mere Man crossed one leg over the other and gazed into the fire regretfully, "that life is getting to be a speculation, and we are all afraid of fooling with watered stock. It's a case of deliver the goods or get out of the game. In a flirtation, there isn't any goods to deliver."

The Bachelor Girl rose so suddenly that the rose slipped from her hair and dropped at the Mere Man's feet. He picked it up and twirled it gently in his fingers.

"In that case," she remarked turning on him scornfully, "You had better not waste any more time," and she held out her hand suggestively.

The Mere Man took it, as he stood up, and clasped the outstretched fingers tightly.

"It's getting very dark," said the Bachelor Girl, struggling to free her hand.

"Why so it is," agreed the Mere Man, calmly.

"And I'm expecting somebody this minute."

"Then before he comes—" began the Mere Man, and he stooped over and lightly brushed her fingers with his lips.

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The Bachelor Girl snatched herself away so suddenly that she overturned the little Dresden clock.

"There," she cried in confusion, "You've upset all my theories and the clock and what did you do that for?"

"Don't you know?" asked the Mere Man, peering down into her face through the dusk as he carefully hid the rose in his left breast pocket.

The Bachelor Girl shook her head, but there was a softer light in her eyes as she turned them on the fire.

"Oh, just to pass the time," said the Mere Man as he closed the door softly behind him.

Fine Dish for Supper.

For Swiss eggs—a delicious supper dish—spread the bottom of a baking dish with two ounces of butter. Cover this with thin slices of American cheese. Place four eggs over the cheese, taking care that the yolks are not broken. Season with pepper and salt; pour around the eggs two tablespoons of rich cream and cover the tops with grated cheese. Bake it for ten minutes, garnish with parsley and serve with fingers of dried toast.

Maple Blanc Manger.

To make a maple blanc manger, boil a quart of milk. Measure out four heaping tablespoons of cornstarch and mix with a little cold milk, then stir it gradually into the remainder of the milk, taking care that it does not form lumps. Cook for ten minutes; break two eggs and beat the whites and yolks separately. Add the yolks to the pudding and cook a few minutes longer. Then remove from the fire and stir in a few drops of vanilla. Cut into thin slices and sprinkled with sugar and a little banana extract. Have ready a pretty mold, and just before pouring the pudding into it fold through it the whipped whites of the eggs. Serve cold on a low dessert platter with whipped cream.

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"It duns the air," says the New York Medical Journal. "The woman who wears it bears about with her a drag-net operating at a height of a little more than five feet above the pavement, a promising attitude at which to gather in microbes. The feathers are so many tentacles for use in the chase. When she gesticulates with her head she distributes her 'catch' upon the just and the unjust impartially, in church, in the theater, and elsewhere. On her return to her home she is very apt to wave the plume over her sleeping child, only to wonder, a few days later, from whom little Johnnie got the scarlet fever."

An Appetizing Dessert.

For a banana dessert, boil a quart of milk in a double boiler. Mix four large spoonfuls of cornstarch with two large spoonfuls of sugar. Thin it with a little cold milk, then stir it gradually into the remainder of the milk, taking care that it does not form lumps. Cook for ten minutes; break two eggs and beat the whites and yolks separately. Add the yolks to the pudding and cook a few minutes longer. Then remove from the fire and stir in a few drops of vanilla. Cut into thin slices and sprinkled with sugar and a little banana extract. Have ready a pretty mold, and just before pouring the pudding into it fold through it the whipped whites of the eggs. Serve cold on a low dessert platter with whipped cream.

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## INVENTION OF EVIL ONE.

Back-buttoned Dress So Ascribed by a Massachusetts Writer.

A writer in the Springfield Republican traces the origin of the back-buttoned waist to the Prince of Darkness. The greatest boon that has befallen women in a century, he or she declares, was the invention of the shirt waist, until the enemy of souls, perceiving the immense advance it meant for her, decided to destroy all this by buttoning it up behind.

The blessed little slip so simplified woman's toilet that Satan knew she would soon have a soul above buttons if he did not get them sewed on behind.

With true demon cunning, he seized on the fact that an unbroken front offers the best field for decoration, and the whole army of shirt-waist designers, with all their factories, were ordered to withdraw every vestige of taste or style from the front-buttoned waist and lavish ever fresh novelties of prettiness on the back buttoned, until at last even simple fineness of materials cannot now be had in the former kind, save in some stupid lines of so-called tailor-made waists, not as becoming to most women as the softer things; so one has to choose between convenience and ugliness.

Satan knew on which horn of this cruel dilemma woman would impale herself, and she is impaled—on the back buttons.

"What?"

"Kiss your hand, without any fear that he would try to kiss your lips; and steal your gloves without feeling that he would eventually use them for pen-wipers, and carry the rose you gave him over his head as a decoration."

"Hear! Hear!"

"Instead of using it to clean his pipe with."

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"And swallow all your nonsense, without feeling that she was swallowing a laugh; and take you in—"

"I beg your pardon?"

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